John Buchanan's Acceptance Speech
The Night Ministry Dinner

The City of Chicago is a marvel.

This neighborhood is amazing: with its department stores, boutiques, spas and salons — high end hotels, skyscrapers, museums, world class hospitals, restaurants and night spots, thousands of tourists, traffic — buses, cabs, ambulances — 4 Starbucks in a 4 block radius.

A magnificent body of fresh water to cool in summer, warm in winter and inspire all season — lots of light, activity, excitement.

And in addition — institutions that care for neighbors mostly invisible — who live here, spend days and nights here.

- people hurting — some poor and hungry, homeless
- who need nothing so much as something to eat and a place to sleep
- children who need support, encouragement, academic help
- young adults — lost, overwhelmed by the city — some alienated from family and home — becoming dependent on drugs

It is a high and holy calling to remember them and reach out in compassion and love — to help, encourage, support, feed, clothe.

And in the process to make this otherwise extraordinary — but distracted — neighborhood and city, human.

That is what Fourth Presbyterian Church tries to do in many ways.

And it is the particular mission of The Night Ministry. We are proud to be a supporter and to share in this critical ministry.

And we are grateful for this recognition tonight. On behalf of the members, officers, and literally thousands of volunteers, I accept this award and to share the evening with our good neighbors, the Westin Hotel and its employees and particularly Ellen and Paul Gignilliat. It is a privilege to be in their company tonight. They are wonderful, faithful members and leaders of Fourth Presbyterian Church, generous and visionary in their involvement. Both our institutions are fortunate indeed to have the Gignilliats at the very center of support of our ministries. They do so much to make Chicago a better city. Congratulations to them, to the Westin employees, and to The Night Ministry for 33 years of providing outreach services to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Thank you again.